



## A Tribute to Dianne Hearn

By JANET RITCH

This week marks the end of the 38-year career of one of Alden School's most respected and beloved teachers. Dianne Hearn has touched the lives of countless children and their families since 1965 when she began a reading program for kindergarten children (in the late 60's kindergarten classes were housed at the Old Sailor's Home on Powder Point Ave). Mrs. Hearn continued as a kindergarten teacher, then moved ahead to primary grades, and eventually became a 3rd grade teacher at Alden School.

Ellen Dianne (Battles) Hearn was born in Norwalk, Ohio and was raised in Waterville, N.Y. Her father, grandfather and brother were all doctors. She attended Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Penn. and graduated from Vassar College in 1952. She spent her summers leading college students on guided tours to Europe. Her first job was in New York City as a hotel representative.

She married William Hearn, a Yale graduate, and moved to Schenectady, N.Y. where he was employed by General Electric. Dianne taught in the Schenectady Schools for three years. With a background in classical education, Dianne was soon teaching French to her inner city students, and was the sub-

ject of *Life* Magazine photo essay in 1957. Soon after, her children Ellen, Amy, and Will were born.

The Hearn family moved to Duxbury in 1963. Here Dianne saw the need for a pre-school program and helped to start a nursery school at the First Parish Church. It was several years later that a kindergarten reading program began, and Mrs. Hearn was hired to implement it.

Her love of reading evolved into a love of writing as well, and Dianne became intrigued by a new method called "process writing," set forth by educator, Donald Graves. She encouraged her students to write from their own experiences, and to write and "publish" daily. She taught process writing classes in the summer and became a mentor to other teachers who also embraced this new methodology.

For the past 12 years Mrs. Hearn has been the inspiration behind Alden School's literary publication, *The Dragon's Tale*, and has done all the planning behind the end-of-year "Writing Gala," an event that encourages all students to showcase their best pieces of writing in printed and illustrated form.

Dianne has been equally inspired by observing science and nature. She takes part in the annual inventory of shore



As Mrs. Hearn steps out of her limo, the Alden School students greet her with gifts, roses, smiles, and especially hugs. Photo by Carolyn Cutler



Mrs. Hearn accepts roses from her 3rd grade class as they wait in line to deliver to her flowers and a special poem they wrote.

birds in the Bay Farm/Jones River area as a volunteer with the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. Because of this interest she has encouraged her 3rd grade students each year to choose a bird species to research, and those beautiful written and illustrated reports are often the keepsake of one's Alden School years.

Over the years, Mrs. Hearn has instilled a sense of kindness, respect, and patriotism in her students. Every morning she greets each child with a handshake and a word of praise or encouragement, and inspires the children to do the same.

Susan Skeiber, Alden School principal, said that Mrs. Hearn has been "an educator of the highest quality. Her commitment to children and the profession of teaching is exemplary and an inspiration to us all. Mrs. Hearn is leaving us this year to begin another phase of her life filled with vacations, tennis, bird watching, and time to enjoy friends and family (including her 10 grandchildren)."

Thank you Mrs. Hearn for all of your years of dedication to children, and all of us whom you have touched.

*Janet Ritch is a former Alden School teacher.*